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SUBJECT: FRIENDS OF PAKISTAN MEETING IN ABU DHABI

¶1. (U) This is an action cable. See paragraph 3 request to deliver talking points regarding the November 17 Friends of Pakistan meeting. See also paragraph 4 requesting information on host government actions in connection with the security situation in Pakistan, s tribal belt.

¶2. (SBU) Background: There is high interest among members of the Friends group about U.S. views on the next meeting as well as on the future direction of the Friends group. The Friends of Pakistan is a group of 15 nations/organizations which first met in New York on September 26 at the ministerial level to help the newly elected Pakistani government deal with long term security and development challenges. The next meeting will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi on November 17 at the senior officials level. The U.S. delegation will be headed by SCA PDAS Donald Camp. Although Pakistani Foreign Ministry coordinators are still finalizing the agenda, we anticipate the meeting will focus on a proposed work plan and organizational issues. While we emphasize that the process be Pakistani-led, we see value in informing other Friends of our views.

¶3. (U) Action addressees are requested to make the following points to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in advance of the November 17 meeting. They can be delivered in the form of a non-paper.

Begin Talking Points:

-- The U.S. is committed to the Friends of Pakistan as a forum in which to help the newly elected government deal with a range of problems - from security to economic development. We welcomed the broad high level participation at the meeting in New York, and we encourage Members to send an appropriate senior level official to the next meeting in Abu Dhabi on November 17.

-- The Friends should be a Pakistani-led process. We understand Pakistan will propose that the meeting in Abu Dhabi be primarily an organizational one, including an overview of their proposed plan of work. We understand they are considering proposing experts' meetings on four specific topics - security, development, energy, and institution

building - to be held in Islamabad, on December 4 and 5, and January 15 and 16, respectively.

-- The Friends should not merely be a forum where Pakistan presents a wish list of projects. We believe the purpose is to engage the Pakistanis to think strategically about their security and development needs, and to ensure that assistance works with their proposed programs to effectively address the challenges of the Pakistani people in a sustainable manner. We need to work closely with the Pakistani government to ensure that they take reforms necessary to make donor assistance as effective as possible.

-- We have emphasized publicly and privately that the Friends is not a donors' group, despite continuing press reports to this effect. In the event that the Pakistani Government reaches agreement with the International Monetary Fund before November 17, the U.S. would welcome the agreement and support convening of a donors' conference (under the auspices of the World Bank and Government of Pakistan) at a future date in the near-term to help fill the residual financing gap and as appropriate consider funding programs to ease the impact of economic reforms on the poorest Pakistanis. If a Pakistan-IMF agreement is not reached before the November 17 Friends meeting, the U.S. will continue to press the Pakistanis to reach an agreement.

-- Two areas where the United States believes international donor coordination could be particularly effective are in the economic development and security in the border regions.

-- Pakistan is considering a proposal to create a Frontier Trust Fund, to be administered by the World Bank (similar to the Afghan Reconstruction Fund). We support this idea and urge other Members to do so as well. To provide direction and integration of all elements of Pakistan's efforts in the frontier, we would encourage Pakistan to both approach the World Bank to request the Fund and then to designate a high level border coordinator who has a proven track record to oversee the Trust Fund. This individual should be given broad authority to coordinate the various development activities and actors in the frontier.

-- The United States remains concerned with the ability of terrorist groups to use the border areas of Pakistan to plan and implement attacks against Pakistanis, Afghans, and coalition and donor partners.

-- The U.S. believes the Friends can offer international support for Pakistan's effort to eliminate terrorist safehavens in the Tribal areas.

-- We would welcome an update by Pakistan on current security operations along the border, and how these activities fit into its overall security strategy for tackling extremism in the area. We are encouraged to see numerous Pakistani officials express interest in security as an agenda item for the Friends, and we look forward to hearing the Pakistan's plans and finding ways for the Friends to assist in implementing them.

-- We expect that the agenda will include a discussion of the role of the UN in the Friends. We understand the UN would be willing to consider providing a small secretariat, and that Jean Arnault, the former UN representative to Afghanistan, is being considered to head this initiative. We strongly support a role for Arnault and the UN in this regard.

End Talking Points.

14. (SBU) Action addressees are requested to approach host governments for information on what diplomatic, developmental and other actions they have taken in connection with the security situation in Pakistan's Tribal Belt. Posts should report responses back to Washington by November 21.

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